

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 NEA-10 CEA-02 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 CIEP-02 STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

RSR-01 /186 W

----- 099705

R 181041 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8123

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 2609

BRUSSELS FOR EC

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAU EAID ETRD LI XG XA

SUBJECT: LIBERIA AND OAU

1. LIKE PREDECESSOR TUBMAN REGIME, ONE OF FOUNDATION STONES OF TOLBERT ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN SUPPORT OF AND ACTIVE ROLE IN OAU AFFAIRS. PRESIDENT TAKES HIS ROLE AS ONE OF OAU VICE PRESIDENTS SERIOUSLY AND WE SUSPECT HE WILL MAKE REAL EFFORT IN ADDIS TO BE HEARD IN WHAT HE CONCEIVES HIS ROLE TO BE-- CONCILIATOR AND MEDIATOR. IN PAST MONTHS HE HAS TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY OUTSIDE HIS BORDERS BOTH ON PURELY BILATERAL MATTERS AS WELL AS OAU SPOKESMAN.

2. WE FEEL HE SEES HIS ROLE OF MIDDLEMAN AS ONE WHICH WILL ALLOW HIM TO PLAY LARGELY INDEPENDENT PART IN ATTEMPTING TO BRING TOGETHER DIVERGENT MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATION. THIS IS TYPICAL OF HIS STYLE AND STEMS IN PART FROM GENUINE DESIRE TO MAKE OAU MORE EFFECTIVE VOICE OF AFRICA AND AT SAME TIME FROM
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REALIZATION HE NEEDS CREATE HIS OWN IMAGE VICE THAT OF TUBMAN WHOSE ROLE AS FOUNDING FATHER OF OAU STILL LOOMS LARGE HERE. TOLBERT CONTINUES NEED USE EVERY WAY OPEN TO HIM TO GAIN SUPPORT AND POPULARITY IN LIBERIA-- OAU ACTIVITIES ARE EASY AND NON-CONTROVERSIAL. IN THIS RESPECT, WE FEEL PAN- AFRICAN AFFAIRS ATTRACT LITTLE ATTENTION HERE EXCEPT INsofar AS THEY REFLECT TO GREATER PRESTIGE OF LIBERIA. WITH SOME FEW EXCEPTIONS, LIBERIANS ARE NOT REALLY CONCERNED WITH NAMIBIA, WITH ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTES, WITH SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN BORDER PROBLEMS AND SIMILAR MATTERS WHICH CONFRONT ADDIS MEETINGS. GUINEA BISSAU BEING CLOSER IS SLIGHTLY MORE IN MINDS OF LIBERIANS BUT EVEN THIS PROBLEM DOES NOT PROFOUNDLY AFFECT OR INTEREST THEM. ONE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION TO THIS ATTITUDE MIGHT BE QUESTION OF WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, BUT EVEN ON THAT MATTER INTERESTED LIBERIANS HAVE AT BEST VAGUE CONCEPTS.

3. SINCE PRESIDENT WILL BE TRAVELLING DIRECTLY TO US AFTER ADDIS, IT MOST LIKELY MUCH OF WHAT HE DOES IN ADDIS WILL BE INFLUENCED BY THIS FACT. HE VALUES HIGHLY WHAT HE FEELS IS A PERSONAL REALTIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT NIXON AND HE WILL NOT WANT HIS PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS AT ADDIS, HAPPENING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HIS WASHINGTON VISIT, HARMFULLY TO AFFECT HIS VISIT TO WHITE HOUSE.

4. WE SUGGEET TOLLOWING MAY BE LIBERIAN POSITIONS ON THE SPECIFIC MATTERS LIKELY TO RECEIVE MOST ATTENTION AT ADDIS:

(A) LIBYAN EFFORTS VIS- A- VIS OAU AND ISRAEL. LIBERIA IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH ISRAEL BUT TOLBERT NO DOUBT REALIZES THIS POLICY CAN BECOME LIABILITY IN AFRICAN CONTEXT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, HE WILL MAKE ANY MAJOR SHIFTS IN THIS POLICY UNLESS SUDDEN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST MAKE DIFFICULT AVOID CHANGE. HE IS CONCERNED OVER TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD, WANTS NO LIBERIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THEM AND WOULD REACT STRONGLY AGAINST ANY GROUP WHICH SOUGHT TO INTRODUCE THEM INTO LIBERIA. IN VIEW OF LIBERIAN ROLE IN FOUNDING OAU AS WELL AS STRONG CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE ON LIBERIAN LEADERSHIP, WE DOUBT STRONGLY HE WOULD AGREE TO LIBYAN DEMANDS TO MOVE HEADQUARTERS FROM ADDIS TO CAIRO.

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(B) LIBERATION. HERE WE CAN SEE TOBLERT IN REAL DILEMMA. HIS BASIC REACTION IS ONE OF MODERATION, YET HIS DESIRE TO PLAY ROLE OF LEADER MIGHT FORCE HIM INTO STRONGER STANDS. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RECENTLY INDICATED HIS BELIEF UNSYG ROLE IN NAMIBIA SHOULD CONTINUE AND IT POSSIBLE TOLBERT WILL SUPPORT SYG IN PRIVATE WHILE EQUIVOCATING IN PUBLIC. ON GUINEA BISSAU WE CAN EXPECT RATHER MORE AFFIRMATIVE STAND DUE IN PART TO

TOLBERT' S GROWING CLOSENESS TO SEKOU TOURE.

(C) EHTIOPIA- SOMALIA. PRESIDENT MAY OFFER HIS SERVICES HERE AS MEDIATOR. SOMALI DELEGATION RECENTLY VISITED LIBERIA; TOLBERT HIMSELF WAS IN MOGADISCIO IN NOVEMBER 1972; AND LIBERIAN-ETHIOPIANRELATIONS HAVE, OF COURSE, BEEN LONG AND WARM IN NATURE. IT IS POSSIBLE HE MIGHT BE ABLE BE EFFECTIVE IN THIS PROBELM AREA, ASSUMING MAJOR PARTIES ARE WILLING ALLOW HIM USE HIS OFFICES.

(D) ECONOMIC ISSUES. LIBERIA HAS CARRIED ON CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS IVORY COAST, SIERRA LEONE AND-- TO MORE LIMITED EXTENT-- GUINEA, LOOKING TO REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT. VERY LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE HAS EMERGED FROM THESE TALKS. GOL ATTITUDE TOWARD POSSIBLE ASSOCAITION WITH EC IS UNCERTAIN BEYOND HOPE THAT AFFILIATION COULD PRODUCE MORE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FOR LIBERIA. THERE WOULD NOT APPEAR BE MUCH TRADE ADVANTAGE TO LIBERIA FROM EC ASSOCIATION. NINETY PERCENT OF LIBERIA' S EXPORTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY INTO EC ON ZERO DUTY BASIS. GOL WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LINE WITH THE

ANGOLPHONES ON QUESTION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES. IN FACT, RECENTLY PUBLISHED 1972 REPORT OF FINANCNE MINISTRY ASSERTS IT WILL BE POSSIBLE QTE FOR LIBERIA TO OBTAIN FAVORED TREATMENT (FROM THE EC) WITHOUT GRANTING REVERSE PREFERENCE TO IMPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY UNQTE. REPORT RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING COURSE SHOULD BE ADOPTED AS GOL POLICY VIS- A- VIS EC: (A) ACCREDIT AMBASSADOR TO EC; (B) SEEK INVITATION TO AUGUST 1973 NEGOITIATIONS BETWEEN EC AND QTE GROUP OF 38 UNQTE; (C) CONSTITUTE TEAM OF EXPERTS TO ADVISE GOL ON BEST TYPE OF ASSOCIATION WITH EC. MANFULL

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MONROV02609
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: MONROVIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730547/aaaajrr.tel
Line Count: 149
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <30-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980219
Subject: LIBERIA AND OAU
TAGS: EAID, ETRD, PFOR, LI, XA, XG
To: ADDIS ABABA
AF
BRUSSELS
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005